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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AID-01	AMAD-01	CIAE-00	COR-01	C-01
	DODE-00	EB-01	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	IO-19
	LAB-04	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01	RP-10	SIL-01	SNP-01
	SP-01	SR-01	SS-01	STR-20	TRSE-00	T-01	FMP-01

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O 111601Z FEB 92  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7723  
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8245

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C O R R E C T E D COPY (STATE TAKE FOR ACTION)

USIA FOR P/G, P/PG, P/PFL, VOA/BRL, B/TVP, AR (RSMITH)

STATE FOR ARA/AND, ARA/P

E.O. 12356: N/A  
TAGS: PGOV, PHUM, VE  
SUBJECT: HOW VENEZULAN MEDIA ARE FUNCTIONING THE DAY  
AFTER THE CENSORS ARE WITHDRAWN

REF: CARACAS 1412

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1. SUMMARY: WITH THE AGREEMENT BY THE GOV TO WITHDRAW  
CIVILIAN MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR CENSORS FROM THE PRESS  
IN EXCHANGE FOR SELF-CENSORSHIP AND RESPONSIBLE EDITING  
BY THE NEWSPAPER OWNERS, VENEZUELAN MEDIA HAVE RETURNED  
TO AN APPEARANCE OF NORMALITY. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF  
COVERAGE AND COMMENTARY ON THIS AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, THE  
CONTINUED SUSPENSION OF PRESS FREEDOM CAN BE FELT IN THE  
INSIPIDNESS AND/OR IRRELEVANCE OF EDITORIAL OPINION AND  
THE SUSPENSION OR DELAYED BROADCASTING OF RADIO AND TV  
TALK SHOWS. END SUMMARY.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON  
DATE/CASE ID: 03 AUG 2006 200503206

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2. MAJOR VENEZUELAN MEDIA, WHILE TRUMPETING THE WITHDRAWAL OF CENSORS FROM THEIR EDITORIAL OFFICES, ARE TAKING A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO COMMENTARY ON OTHER ASPECTS OF THE POST-COUP ATTEMPT ENVIRONMENT. EDITORIALS AND OP-EDS ON THE FIRST DAY OF SELF-CENSORSHIP ARE RELATIVELY SOFT ON THE GOV AND CRITICAL OF THE COUP ATTEMPT (E.G. "EL DIARIO DE CARACAS" 2/11/92 COLUMNS "DEATH TO THE COUP; LONG LIVE LIBERTY" AND "THE NASSER-ISM OF THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY").

3. NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN A BIT MORE DARING ON THE ISSUE OF PRESS FREEDOM, CARRYING EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND THE NEWSPAPER OWNERS, AND STATEMENTS BY THE NEWSPAPER OWNERS AND EDITORS. "EL NACIONAL," WHICH CONSIDERS ITSELF THE MOST AGGRIEVED, DEVOTES ALMOST 7 FULL PAGES TO THE ISSUE, INCLUDING ON PAGE A-2 "INTERNATIONAL REPUDIATION OF THE GAG RULE IN VENEZUELA," WITH REPRINTS OF "NEW YORK TIMES" AND "NEWSWEEK" ARTICLES, EFE COVERAGE OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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2/10 STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING, AND ARTICLES ON PROTESTS BY THE INTERAMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF JOURNALISTS.

4. RADIO AND TELEVISION ARE HANDLING THE SITUATION EITHER BY FEATURING NON-CONTROVERSIAL GUESTS ON NON-CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS (E.G. RADIO CARACAS TELEVISION MORNING INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER OF THE FAMILY) OR, LIKE TELEVEN (CARACAS CHANNEL 10) AND KYS-FM, BY SUSPENDING BROADCAST OF OPINION PROGRAMS. VENEVISION HAS SUSPENDED ITS EVENING INTERVIEW PROGRAMS "FOR TWO WEEKS TO BROADCAST COVERAGE OF THE WINTER OLYMPICS", DURING WHICH PERIOD THE MORNING INTERVIEW PROGRAMS WILL BE CONDENSED AND INCORPORATED INTO THE MID-DAY NEWS. GOV-OWNED VENEZOLANA DE TELEVISION ANTICIPATES NO CHANGE IN THEIR PROGRAMMING.

5. COMMENT: WHILE THE MEDIA AND THE GOV SEEM CONTENT WITH THE AGREEMENT REACHED, THE SUSPENSION OF CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES IS STILL IN EFFECT. ON AN EVEN LESS HAPPY NOTE, A SOURCE IN THE AD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE SUSPENSION WILL CONTINUE THROUGH THE FEBRUARY 27 ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1989

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RIOTS. CHAPLIN

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